

Kirkwood Bridges Replacement Scoping Information

July 8, 2020

Location

The bridges are located at the Kirkwood Historic Ranch in the Wallowa Whitman National Forest, Hells Canyon National Recreation Area of Idaho, and the Wild and Scenic Snake River Corridor. The Kirkwood Historic Ranch is located approximately 18 miles Northwest of Riggins, Idaho (see map 1).

Purpose and Need

There is a need to replace two trail bridges located at the Kirkwood Historic Ranch, along the Wild and Scenic Snake River. The Kirkwood Ranch receives approximately 24,000 visitors per year, with the majority accessing the site by boat. Both bridges are important for recreational access at this site.

The Pack Bridge is part of the Snake River National Recreation Trail #102, which crosses Kirkwood Creek approximately 440 feet from the confluence with the Snake River. In addition to providing for hiker and stock use, this bridge provides access to facilities on the north side of the Creek. Trail #102 experiences moderate to high use during the spring, which coincides with high creek flows.

Bridge girders and the north abutment, which had been previously undermined, failed during the spring of 2020. Rock and debris has accumulated mid-channel, upstream of the bridge location, and is directing flows toward the bank on the northside of the bridge. A low water ford is located at the mouth of Kirkwood Creek, but is not usable at high flows. The Kirkwood Foot Bridge provides alternate pedestrian access during normal flows, but at high flows (late-April through May) is often overtopped by water and not safe to use.

The Foot Bridge is located at the mouth of Kirkwood Creek. This bridge is typically used by visitors to the Kirkwood Historical Ranch, who access the site by boat. The bridge receives moderate to high use from spring through fall, with most use occurring during the peak summer season.

Proposed Action

The Pack Bridge would be replaced as a single span approximately 50 feet in length and 6 feet wide. The bridge would be constructed of steel girders and vertical supports for handrails; decking and handrails would be untreated sawn lumber. Up to 8'x16"x16" cast in place spread footings would support the structure at each end.

The Foot Bridge would be replaced as a single span approximately 50 feet in length and 4 feet wide. The bridge would be constructed of steel girders and vertical supports for handrails; decking and handrails would be untreated sawn lumber. Up to 16"x16" cast in place spread footings would support the structure at each end.

The design for both bridges considers the historic and aesthetic values found at Kirkwood Ranch. The use of naturally rusting steel and natural wood decking and rails are intended to replicate the aesthetics of Kirkwood Ranch.

Wood materials from the existing bridges would be dismantled and re-used or disposed of following agency guidelines. The concrete abutments would be dismantled and removed using a combination of small excavator and hand tools. Small equipment such as a skid-steer would be used to transport concrete for disposal. The debris upstream of the bridge site that is diverting flow toward the north bank would be removed from the channel to reduce the potential for bank erosion.

For both bridges, the depth of the footings would be as shallow as possible to level the sill. Transport of bridge materials would be accomplished primarily by boat. The new bridge structure, including abutments, would be located outside of the bank-full width of the channel so as not to affect the free flow of the stream.

The preferred comment submission platform is via our webpage. Submit electronic comments on the project webpage: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=57862> by selecting the “Comment on Project” link in the “Get Connected” group at the right-hand side of the project webpage. Put the project name in the subject line; attachments may be in the following formats: plain text (.txt), rich text format (.rtf), Word (.doc, .docx), or portable document format (.pdf).

Alternatively, please share your input regarding this proposal by contacting Andrea Holmquist at 541-426-5533, andrea.holmquist@usda.gov, and P.O. Box 905, Joseph, OR 97846. If you would like any additional information about the project, please contact Sweyn Wall, Project Team Leader, at sweyn.wall@usda.gov, and Wallowa Mountains Office, P.O. Box 905, Joseph, OR 97846. Please provide input by August 6th, 2020. Thank you for your interest in this project.

